

DROUOT
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ABOARD THE NORMANDIE

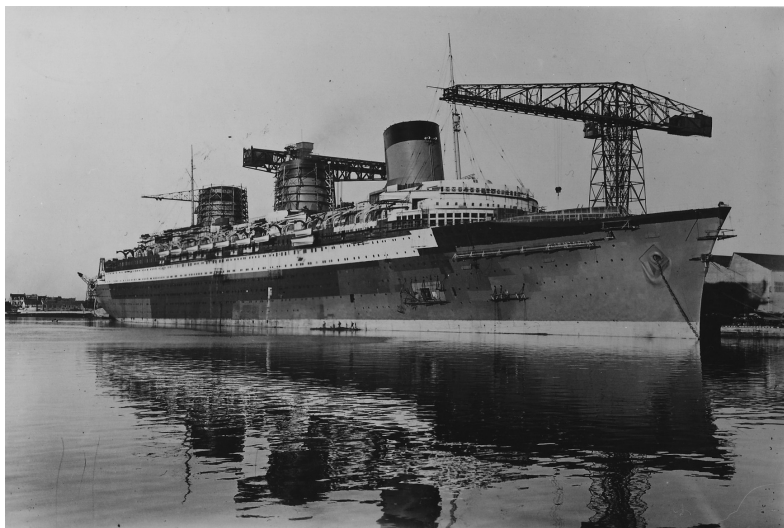
AUCTION ON 25 APRIL 2018

On Wednesday 25 April, auction house Tessier Sarrou & Associates will dedicate a sale to the iconic liner. Photographs, flyers, documents and archives will take visitors through the short but brilliant path of the Normandie.

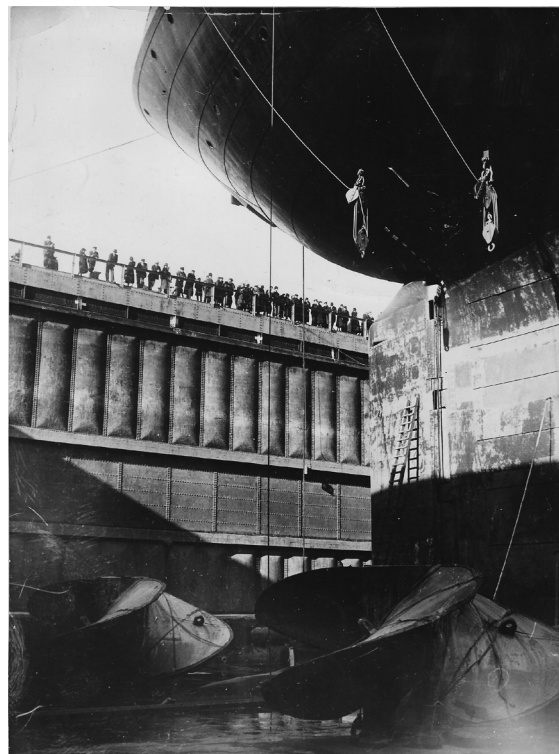


KEYSTONE, A Breton woman in front of the Normandie.
Estimate (lot): €300-500
©Tessier-Sarrou/Drouot

The audacious project of combining speed and grandeur began in the late 1920s when the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique planned to connect two continents, giving birth to the Normandie. Its hull, named T6, was built on Penhoët's construction site in Saint-Nazaire (France), in early 1931.



Construction of the Normandie.
Estimate (lot): €300-500 ©Tessier-Sarrou/Drouot



KEYSTONE, view of the back of the Normandie.
Estimate (lot): €300-500 ©Tessier-Sarrou/Drouot



Roger SCHALL, Inaugural journey. Colette and the Director of the magazine Comœdia. Estimate (lot): €800-1000



KEYSTONE, Triumphant arrival of the Normandie in New York
Estimate (lot): €150-200 ©Tessier-Sarrou/Drouot



Gala dinner. 30 June 1935 in New-York.
Estimate (lot): €200-300 ©Tessier-Sarrou/Drouot

The liner is finished four years later, and its extraordinary destiny can begin. On the eve of the departure in May 1935, an inaugural soirée is held aboard, welcoming no less than a thousand people, including French President Lebrun.

Its first journey to New-York included important passengers like the President's wife, also the godmother of the boat, Marguerite Lebrun, writers Colette and Blaise Cendrars, actress Valentine Tessier, several Ministers and Senators, two members of the French Académie and Kapurthala's Maharajah. With an average speed of 29,94 knots, the Normandie is the quickest liner to cross the Atlantic and is rewarded by the Transatlantic Navigation Companies with the 'Ruban Bleu', a very sought-after prize created in the 19th century.



Changing the name of the Normandie
 Estimate (lot): €150-250 ©Tessier-Sarrou/Drouot

The declaration of war in 1939 leads to the Normandie being immobilised in New-York's harbour. As the United States is about to take part in the war in April 1941, the Congress votes the use of the liner for transporting troops. Important work is undertaken to equip the boat and to welcome 16,000 men aboard. All the furniture and décor is removed, except for the theatre, religious places and two luxurious apartments that are kept for commanding officers. The former 'Normandie' is renamed 'USS Lafayette'.

On 9 February 1942 when additional work is still being done, a fire quickly spreads from the main living room to the deck. Over 10,000 tons of water are used to put the fire out, except the liner is thrown off balance and rolls on a side under the tide's pressure on the next night. Extremely damaged, the project of refurbishment is finally rejected. In 1945, the Navy wants to give the wreck back to France, which France refuses. It is then bought by the Lipsett brothers and demolished in 1947, generating a million-dollar profit.



Press agency photograph. The Normandie on its side on the morning of 10 February 1942 after the fire. Estimate (lot): €150-250 ©Tessier-Sarrou/Drouot



KEYSTONE, Demolition of the Normandie in Port Newark in 1947.
 Estimate (lot): €200-300 ©Tessier-Sarrou/Drouot



KEYSTONE, Demolition of the Normandie in Port Newark in 1947.
 Estimate (lot): €200-300 ©Tessier-Sarrou/Drouot

The 2,000 photographs comprised in the sale (grouped into 360 lots) retrace the life of the Normandie, from its birth to sad end. The original photographs and reprints from negatives by Roger SCHALL (1904-1995), François KOLLAR (1904-1979), DESBOUTIN and BYRON will take all collectors and connoisseurs through the fantastic destiny of this legendary boat.

PUBLIC AUCTION - DROUOT - ROOM 14 **PUBLIC EXHIBITION - DROUOT - ROOM 14**

Wednesday 25 April - 2pm

Tuesday 24 April - 11am / 6pm

Wednesday 25 April - 11am / 12pm

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